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Message Text

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47
ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 EUR-12 AF-06 ARA-06 EA-06 RSC-01

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R 061053Z FEB 75
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8715
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ROME FOR FODAG

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AORG, FAO, PK
SUBJECT: FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL NOMINATIONS

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 0187; (B) STATE 7343

1. SUMMARY. GOP HAS INFORMALLY FLOATED NAME OF POSSIBLE PAKISTAN CANDIDATE FOR FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL: SARTAJ AZIZ. SEEKS US REACTION. END SUMMARY.

2. ON FEBRUARY 5 MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR UN AFFAIRS HAYAT MEHDI CALLED IN ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL COUNCELOR AND SAID THERE HAD BEEN A NEW DEVELOPMENT ON THE SUBJECT OF FILLING THE UPCOMING VACANT POSITION OF FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL. WHEREAS EARLIER THE MFA HAD PLANNED TO SUPPORT THE LEBANESE CANDIDATE, SAOUMA, BUT WAS ATTRACTED BY THE SALVADORAN CANDIDATE AQUINO, THE PAKISTANIS WERE NOW TENTATIVELY CONSIDERING SPONSORING A PAKISTANI CANDIDATE. THIS WAS SARTAJ AZIZ, AN FAO SENIOR OFFICAL.

3. ACCORDING TO HAYAT MEHDI, MFA'S INTEREST IN SARTAJ AZIZ DID NOT ORIGINATE WITH GOP BUT FROM AN EGYPTIAN, SAEED MUREI, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE. SAEED MUREI
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RECENTLY APPROACHED GOP AUTHORITIES TO SAY THAT HE THOUGHT

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SARTAJ AZIZ MUCH MORE QUALIFIED THAN ANY OF THE PRESENT FOUR CANDIDATES, AND MOREOVER DID NOT BELIEVE THAT EITHER THE SALVADORAN OR LEBANESE, THE ALLEGED FRONT RUNNERS, WOULD BE ABLE TO WIN. SAEED MUREI TOLD THE GOP THAT HE WAS SO CONVINCED OF THE SUPERIOR QUALIFICATIONS OF SARTAJ AZIZ THAT HE WOULD BE WILLING TO FLOAT HIS CANDIDACY INFORMALLY WITH VARIOUS REGIONAL GROUPS OF COUNTRIES. THE GOP ASSENTED. THE GOP HAS ALSO BEEN INFORMED THAT OUTGOING FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL BOERMA PERSONALLY PREFERS SARTAJ AZIZ TO ANY OF THE OTHER FOUR. AS A RESULT OF ALL THIS, THE MFA HAS INSTRUCTED ITS AMBASSADORS TO MAKE INFORMAL SOUNDINGS WITH HOST COUNTRIES AS TO THE CHANCES OF SARTAJ AZIZ.

4. THE MFA DIRGEN ADDED THAT HE WAS FULLY AWARE THAT THE USG HAS STATED THAT IT COULD NOT COMMIT ITSELF TO ANY CANDIDATE UNTIL AFTER THE APRIL FILING DEADLINE (REFTEL B), BUT THE MFA WISHED USG TO KNOW OF THE ABOVE NEW DEVELOPMENT AND IF POSSIBLE DESIRED AN INFORMAL US REACTION. THE MFA PARTICULARLY WISHED A CONFIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT BY USG AUTHORITIES OF THE PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF SARTAJ AZIZ AS COMPARED TO THE KNOWN FOUR CANDIDATES, AND ANY OTHER US REACTION.

5. THE GOP ONLY PLANNED TO THROW SARTAJ AZIZ'S NAME FORMALLY INTO THE RING IF COUNTRIES LIKE THE US FELT HE WAS EMINENTLY QUALIFIED FOR THE POST AND STOOD A CHANCE OF WINNING. THE DIRGEN SAID HE WAS SURE THERE WERE US OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON AND ROME WHO MUST BE ACQUAINTED WITH SARTAJ AZIZ AND HIS ABILITIES. HE ADDED THAT IF IN FACT SARTAJ AZIZ WERE TO RECEIVE THE SUPPORT OF THE US, THIS WOULD OF COURSE VERY MUCH HELP THE CHANCES OF HIS CANDIDACY.

6. REQUEST. WE WOULD APPRECIATE QUIDANCE ON THIS DELICATE MATTER. WHILE IT IS CLEAR THE PAKS WOULD LIKE TO SEE SARTAJ AZIZ BECOME FAO DIRGEN, AND WOULD WELCOME US SUPPORT TO THIS END, WE ALSO BELIEVE THE MFA IS LIKELY TO REFRAIN FROM NOMINATING HIM IF THERE IS INSUFFICIENT WORLD ENTHUSIASM FOR HIM.
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